

The training of
the clergy.

J. H. Canfield.

BV
1471
.C36
1903

5.1.05

Library of the Theological Seminary

PRINCETON, N. J.

BV 1471 .C36 1903

[Canfield, James Hulme]

1847-1909.

The training of the clergy



THE TRAINING OF THE CLERGY

From the Standpoint of a Layman, What Constitutes
Adequate Preparation for the Priesthood of the
Protestant Episcopal Church

Jas. A. Ganje Jr.

THE TRAINING OF THE CLERGY

From the Standpoint of a Layman, What Constitutes Adequate Preparation for the Priesthood of Our Church*

Small apology need be made for the abruptness, the assertiveness, and the one-sidedness of this paper. Its length does not measure at all the importance of its theme. In the twenty minutes allotted me this morning, it is impossible to discuss this practical and far-reaching inquiry in either a very logical or a very philosophical or a very complete manner. You must be content with a mere outline, a skeleton which you yourselves must clothe with living flesh if it is to be rounded out and made to appear in good form.

It is entirely proper that this question should be presented from the standpoint of a layman. Very humbly, and because of their needs, the laity assert that the Church exists for their advancement and betterment; that on its divine and on its human side, in spirit and in forms of organization and of administration, the Church was created for the laity. The Church does not exist for the three orders of the ministry, it exists for the laity, and the three orders are orders of service to the laity. The Church and the three orders are entirely and absolutely and always subservient to the needs of the laity. The Church and all its orders and forms and rites and ceremonies must meet that supreme test of all organization and effort, sacred or secular, ecclesiastical or civil or social: the efficiency with which it advances and enlarges and renders more completely satisfactory the life of the individual man. The laity have a right, therefore, to be heard in this matter.

And, dear brethren of the Clergy and of the Episcopate, the laity have a far deeper interest in education for the priesthood than you perhaps imagine. The subject is more often a topic of conversation among them than you perhaps will readily believe. The intelligence of this interest is greater than you may think possible. But this interest and this intelligence would be far greater and far more effective if both were recognized at your hands, and recognized as of possible and practical value.

With regard to the problem under consideration, let it be understood with some emphasis that this is adequate preparation for one who is to be of the second rank in the Church, for one who

* Read at the Church Congress, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, November 4, 1903, by James H. Canfield, Librarian, Columbia University in the City of New York.

in the language of the Book of Common Prayer is to receive "the Order of Priesthood." I lay especial stress upon this, because it is not difficult to believe that some will say that an impossible standard is being raised, that the ideal is purely theoretic and cannot be realized, that to insist upon it would mean the emptying of many of our pulpits. But, men and brethren, let me assure you, first, that in all kindness yet in all sincerity the laity believe that worse could happen to our beloved Church than the emptying of some of her pulpits! And second, that the laity marvel that the Church seems to feel it necessary to recognize in orders so much that is confessedly weak, while it treats in such a left-handed manner certain nearby sources of strength. I refer to the use of laymen themselves, much more generally and in a much more definite way than now. Many a priest is carrying his entire work alone, with great and unnecessary wear and tear, wondering anxiously when he will be able to have that long-hoped-for assistant; when he could easily secure from among his own people one or more lay-readers, to his great relief and not infrequently to the edification of the entire parish. For it is still true that there is no greater power than the pure Word of God read intelligently and intelligibly before the people, and no thought or language more comforting or more helpful than that of our service presented sympathetically, day after day, in the usual place of worship. And how many laymen would be quickened into new life by their careful preparation for such service, by their new or renewed study of the Word, by their constant effort to prove worthy of such confidence and to fit themselves to lead the people in these devotions. There is no reason why there should not be at least three such lay-readers in every parish having no other assistants: one for the morning service, one for the evening service, one for special services and to relieve each of the others when necessary—and all for mission work as far as their daily vocations will permit. This work would never be a financial burden to the parish, because it should always be gratuitous: the contribution which these citizens of our ecclesiastical commonwealth gladly make towards the common interest and common betterment. Such a thing as a paid lay-reader ought to be absolutely unknown in our Communion. There is danger in this from every point of view: and there is no necessity for it whatever.

And, brethren, the laity would really like to know if it is not possible, by some form of organization or of re-organization, to make more of the Diaconate. By the early history and practice of our Church it would seem to have been quite as distinct and permanent an order as either of the other two: not simply a landing on the ecclesiastical stairway where men may stop a moment to catch breath

before again climbing upwards. The laity believe that many a man may be ready for this position long before he is adequately prepared for the priesthood: nay, more, that many men may enter upon this work who may never reach the priesthood. The laity wonder if it is impossible to revive or secure a permanent Diaconate: and can see a large measure of usefulness in such an order in a somewhat modified form from that known at present. If this cannot be, then at least let the Diaconate be a state of probation, the real (not the nominal) testing ground of all who are to enter the priesthood. Let those only who respond in a satisfactory way to prolonged severe trial and examination pass to the higher position. Let the rubric be amended so as to read "and here it must be declared unto the Deacon that he must continue in that office of a Deacon at least a whole year, *and* until it shall seem clear to the Bishop that he is perfect and well expert in all things appertaining to ecclesiastical administration."

It seems necessary and desirable to make a brief preliminary statement as to the field, its character and its demands. All laymen still hold the ministry to be one of the most important of all human vocations. He who enters upon this form of service should walk humbly before God and man. He who accepts this form of leadership should feel keenly the responsibility of his position: a responsibility always entirely commensurate with his opportunity. He who undertakes to wield such a social, civic and moral force as a modern parish, should know himself and his task well, should be quick of eye and foot and pliant and strong of wrist. No calling makes greater or more imperative or more varied demands upon body, mind and spirit, than does this. That ordinary and one may almost say national resourcefulness, which makes an American about as strong and about as successful in one position as in another, while it counts for much, counts for less in the ministry than in any other form of human activity. More than almost anywhere else is there need of special temper, special fitness, special preparation: need of a very "effectual calling." An attorney works continually with his kind, with men who are his peers or his superiors, but always with men whose minds are constantly and seriously given to the consideration of the same subjects that he is considering, whose habits of thought and whose general temper and interests are quite identical with his own. The physician is practically absolute in both theory and practice, and cannot well be gainsaid because he is so generally silent. He deals with those who are either entirely ignorant of what is passing in his mind or are temporarily too weak in mind and body to take issue with him even if they would. The teacher has constantly before him the immature mind, the brain which is still gelatinous and without def-

inite outline, the human intellect and the human will still weak and staggering, as wobbly and as ungainly as a new-born colt—and as easy to direct and train, if one only knows how. The specialist in any of the dozen or more callings which have already risen to the dignity of new professions, speaks with final authority to those who are in business or other relations with him because of their confidence in his strength and general fitness to be their guide, and who expressly surrender themselves to his direction. But the minister must take a single theme which is at least two thousand years old and upon every variation of which myriads of human beings have already exhausted their highest powers, a theme in which the human heart has great interest but against the general trend and conclusions of which that same human heart seems to rebel; and he must so vitalize this and revivify it and clothe it anew that it shall take strong hold with convincing power upon old and young, men and women, the learned and illiterate, the wise and the foolish, the strong mind and the feeble mind, the sober and the frivolous, the interested and the indifferent, those who are always and everywhere easily persuaded and those who always stand so straight that they are in danger of falling backward: to all of these, and to more and other, the minister must be leader and guide and friend, ever discerning the truth that is eternal, and quickening and inspiring all these to make it their truth, their very own, part of their own inmost lives.

And he must have sympathies so warm and so strong that he is welcomed at every fireside, where he halves all trouble and sorrow and doubles all joy by sharing both; yet of all men he must place an alert and well-balanced and keenly appreciative and perceptive intellect at the very threshold of his faculties and powers, directing them all, holding all in check in order that all may have full play. Otherwise sympathy soon wears out his heart with excess of emotion, or becomes maudlin and misleading.

The demand for absolute integrity in all mental processes, for unswerving honesty in all relations, for unquestioned sincerity in all moral and spiritual manifestations, for warmth and glow of the whole emotional nature, is imperative and unceasing. Once, even once, let action seem cold and formal and perfunctory, manifest even the slightest patronizing spirit, let the shadow of doubt be cast upon the sincerity of purpose or the unselfishness of motive, and the first step has been taken on a downward path almost sheer in its descent.

There is still another side to all this. Someone has well described a modern parish as not only a field but a force. These people are to be set right not only with God but with their fellow men. Indeed, we are coming to understand, I had almost said we are

only just coming to understand, that we can be set right with God only by assuming correct relations with our fellow men. It is difficult to understand how we can manifest love to God except through our very efficient interest in God's creatures: and this interest must cover not only the more limited personal relations, but those general and broader though none the less exacting relations which constitute human society and the modern community or state. And so the minister is not only teacher and monitor and guide, but in the largest and best sense of the word he is a statesman. Not a politician, even in the good sense of the word: for the choice between political parties ought to be simply a choice of means for attaining the same great end, good government; and this choice should be made freely and without disturbing far more important parochial relations. But a statesman, in that he is continually setting the faces of his people towards that which is thoughtful and considerate and unselfish and wise and large-minded in all public affairs. Possibly, since the struggle for communal interests and communal righteousness is so constant and so severe, it were better to describe the minister as a regimental or brigade or division commander. With the heart of his people right towards God, he organizes them for that sort of warfare which is correctly described by the phrase "church militant"—a far safer temper and position than that which contents itself with being merely a church protest-ant, so often alas! quickly becoming the church dormant. In this great effort to revive and strengthen neighborhood feeling and neighborly interest, he organizes his people thoroughly, seeing that each has something definite to do, studying the peculiar fitness of each, striving as far as possible to keep square pegs out of round holes. Here is the demand for tactfulness born of experience and of some sad experience, perhaps, for a knowledge of men, an acquaintance with human nature in all its phases, ability to adapt means to ends, resourcefulness, shrewdness, genuine administrative power. Above all, right here he must have the grace and strength to avoid that greatest of temptations, a "brilliant administration": in which the personality of the leader is ever resplendent, and the rank and file are ever in shadow, in the background. He must learn that most difficult of all lessons, the lesson of self-effacement, the lesson of patience, the lesson of doing slowly and painfully and inefficiently through others that which he can do much better and so much more quickly alone. "The trouble is," cried Theodore Parker in those trying days of the anti-slavery struggle, "the trouble is that God can wait for man's cooperation and I can't." Yet it is better to be ten years in reaching a given point and have with you an appreciative, intelligent, self-respecting people, who know what they

fight for and love what they know, than to reach the same goal in half the time by your own unaided strength, by your own dominant mind, by your own masterful spirit—surrounded by a confused, dazed, perplexed, half-appreciative and half-irritated people. This last is the method of that power which drops from the dying hand of what the world often unwiseley calls greatness: but the first is the possibly unseen path of those who create vital organisms, the constitution-makers of the world, of those whose finite work is taken up in part at least by a divine hand and woven in and in with that divine plan which is enduring and eternal.

This then is the demand which the conditions of to-day and the mind and temper of to-day make upon the ministry. Nor should we be guilty of the only too common error of believing that this demand differs materially in different parishes: that the demand for high character and sound preparation which falls upon the rector of a rural parish is less than that which comes to one responsible for the administration of a parish in the small town or inland city, and that this again falls below that of a metropolitan organization. That as between parishes there may be a difference in the peculiar qualities which must be more dominant to insure success, and a difference in the constant and hourly pressure upon the ecclesiastical leader, may be and doubtless is true: but that strength of character and sufficiency of preparation and experience and equipment may be safely scaled down from Pittsburg to Podunk or from New York to Navesink, is a terrible mistake in both judgment and practice. Wherever a weak country parish is found to-day, it is weak generally because of this error. It is a very human error and affects other undertakings than parish building. With unconscious simple-mindedness and shortsightedness, with great thoughtlessness, yet with perfect sincerity, many Eastern educators still recommend to full chairs in Western universities—institutions in which the average line of vital instruction and inspiring personal influence rises quite as high as it does east of the Alleghenies—persons who could scarcely find places in their home high schools. Exactly so do some Bishops pass on to that vague section called the West, and send to the country villages, ministers who have proved to be absolute failures in their own dioceses or in some city parishes. We need a great awakening to the truth that often most of all does the rural parish or that of the small town make the very strongest demands upon every faculty and power, and with but a tithe of the aid so easily within call in nearly every city organization: that in the rural parishes are laid the foundations of character and religious belief which in time form the chief cornerstones of all our civic greatness: that in such parishes there is far more interest taken in the personality of the rector

and far more known about the rector because of far more constant and intimate personal relations: and that there is no happier or more blessed lot than to go in and out among these people, their counselor and friend, their pattern and inspiration, their leader and guide, till two and possibly three generations call you blessed; and at the last the whole countryside mourns beside your open grave and the little children cry in the village street when they hear that you have gone.

Pardon me if I seem to dwell too long upon the field, if I even seem to magnify the office. Unless you realize the estimate which the layman places upon the ministry, you will not be able to understand his demands for preparation or to sympathize with him in these demands. This then, briefly, almost roughly, is the field as the laity see it; and these are the qualities of mind and heart which the laity believe to be demanded.

He, then, who is adequately prepared for the priesthood should bring to it, first, a sound body. You will recall the extraordinary care used to secure perfect bodily health in the priests in the ancient Temple, and this is not without its lesson. There are exceptions, of course, to all rules: and therefore to this. But he is bold who will claim that he is an exception, and he is bolder yet who will accept and endorse such a claim. The man who is to move both freely and powerfully in the intellectual and spiritual world needs that perfect health which makes him practically unconscious of his body. No man can serve two masters, and no man can serve his stomach or his lungs or his liver or his nerves and effectually serve a great and divine cause at the same time. Self-consciousness is always a serious weakness and defect, and the worst form of this is physical self-consciousness. It becomes a veritable body of death from which men pray in vain to be set free. Both mental and moral vision are clouded by it, where both ought to be most serenely clear. It warps and twists and distorts the whole man, as well as his physical frame. The successful minister of God needs good red blood in his veins and arteries—of infinitely more consequence to him than the bluest blue blood on earth!—the abounding physical resiliency which breaks the effect of every rude shock, that physical buoyancy which will rise triumphant over every obstacle, that abundant and surplus energy which carries a man swiftly and safely through every emergency, that steadiness of eye and nerve necessary for every delicate task.

To this he should add such general education and culture as are represented by an approved and standard college course: a modern college course, in which such humanities as economics and sociology and political science and industrial history have full recognition. This is not because he has special need of the Greek and

Latin, though this is true; nor because he will make direct use of his mathematics or literature or even of his philosophy; but because he does need the maturing and ripening, the self-knowledge and self-control, the general self-mastery, which rarely come as well or as soon by any other process or by any other form of life. The other great and standard professions are coming to recognize this, and the ministry cannot afford to lag in the rear. The proportion of college-bred men in every parish is constantly increasing, and he who is to be an influential man among men must meet this condition. One may easily bend down, if necessary, to touch one's fellows; but it is almost impossible to reach up and make your touch that of a master-hand. Consciously or unconsciously, we Americans have expressed our appreciation of the place and value of college training, in that we have so chosen our public servants and representatives that one per cent. of the population (college bred) holds forty per cent. of all the positions of trust, honor and responsibility in the gift of the people. The priesthood, as the laity see it and accept it, as a great profession and as a sacred trust, cannot afford to fall behind in this matter.

I am entirely willing to admit, and without discussion, that some men who have had scarcely more than the elements of a common school training have reached the highest positions of trust and honor and responsibility and financial reward; and that some who have added to this limited early education very inadequate special preparation, have stood high in the Christian Church in all ages. To deny this would be as foolish as it would be futile; to ignore it would be very short-sighted indeed. But the path to successful service, in the Church or elsewhere, is an exceedingly difficult path. Where one has trodden it successfully, hundreds have been beaten back—discouraged and disheartened, with serious loss of that which with better preparation might have been positive productive power, a loss not only to themselves but to the community at large. Worse than this discouragement and failure, however, is the fact that other hundreds who have found place and even preferment, have brought disaster and suffering to the world because they have never been more than half prepared for their work. In this day, and in this land of ours which keeps the pathway to this preparation wide open to all, which in a very generous manner makes this pathway of preparation firm and smooth; which supports a system of public and free education, including in all parts of the country primary and secondary schools and in many states of the Union covering even the highest forms of general, technical and professional training; with scholarships and fellowships innumerable, and with unusual opportunities afforded to young men, who must make their own way, as the

saying goes—under all these conditions there is no excuse whatever for the man who seeking this high vocation neglects or for any reason fails to secure his first academic degree. Our question is simply this: not what may barely suffice in the way of preparation, rather what is ample and sufficient: not how slight the preparation may be and yet give some measure of success, rather what constitutes complete and adequate preparation for the largest success.

Added to thorough college training must come technical or professional training. Let no one imagine that this paper is to criticize the curricula or methods now known in our theological seminaries. I am not entirely uninformed as to these details. I believe that I know what the laity think this special training ought to be, and I am quite sure that I know what it is not—in several seminaries! But the present discussion is to remain purely academic, and concerns itself with what ought to be, and in this matter at least with what is entirely possible.

The general conditions of all worthy and successful technical or professional training are the same everywhere, and consist (briefly) of the following:

First—A body of instructors who are easily and generally recognized as expert, each an accepted authority in his special field of inquiry, each in full possession of his powers, each still vigorous and alert and keenly alive to all that is transpiring in his line of thought and effort, men who are open-minded and sane and well-balanced, men to whom is granted all possible freedom of thought and expression, and men whose mental and spiritual activity shows itself at least occasionally in the printed page.

The converse or obverse of this, of course, would be men practically unknown; men who have drifted into their positions as into snug harbors of safe retreat from the cares and responsibilities of active life, or who having been counted as good sailors before the invention of steam have never taken the trouble to modernize their craft and consequently lie becalmed and motionless the greater part of the time; men of whom when their death-notice appears other men look dazed and exclaim, "Why, I thought he died several years ago"; men who are without definite opinions or concerning whose opinions little is known and less is cared; men whose lecture manuscripts are yellow with age and so faded that even their authors can scarcely decipher the pages; men who seem strangely dead to all that is passing about them, who never feel the mighty onward flow of modern life, or who feeling it simply struggle feebly against it; men whose foresight is always gloomy and whose hind-sight is ever rose-tinted; men who still think the world too weak and too infantile to take truth except in

such rare and homeopathic doses as they may see fit to administer. There are such men, of course, even in the world of to-day: and far be it from me to assert that they have no place in the divine polity. But nothing can convince the laity that they have a rightful place in our schools of theology.

Second—Sufficient maintenance to give both faculty and students every desirable and necessary facility for the prosecution of their investigations and studies.

Sound and thorough education is expensive; it makes large and just and necessary demands upon material resources, that it may adequately repay those who give it their time and effort. I am not to be understood as declaiming against the institution which is small in its student membership—that condition may be even desirable, though it may indicate a waste of both instruction and money. But institutions whose material resources are so limited that it is simply impossible for them to provide either adequate instruction or reasonable equipment, are certainly under the bann—and ought to bestir themselves mightily if they are to give a satisfactory reason for their continued existence. Institutions in which one man is supposed to be expert in a half-dozen subjects, in which administration and instruction are disproportionately blended, or in which the chief instruction is sought to be covered by a short series of gratuitous lectures delivered by already overworked presbyters, which never give to members of its instructional force the Sabbatical year so necessary for that individual study and observation upon which all individual advancement and development are conditioned;—such institutions cannot meet the demands of to-day. It is to be hoped that there are none like this within the limits of our own communion.

Third—Over both instructors and students, administrators who are large-minded, resourceful, good judges of men, swift to discern weakness but neither captious nor hypercritical, industrious, and truly and lawfully ambitious.

The laity believe that the head of every theological seminary has four-fold relations and duties:

To the trustees he must be the man who wisely and vigorously executes their plans, who sees that every man in the faculty is well-chosen and well-placed and that every dollar is well-spent, who can at any time put the trustees in the possession of any information they may need regarding the material condition or educational work of the seminary, who will make it possible for the trustees to consider general policies rather than to care for details, and who will keep the trustees in touch with every person and every interest and every condition—but only in touch, not burdened thereby.

To his faculty he is the one who makes possible uninterrupted

attention to the work of investigation and instruction, who sees that each has the greatest equality in right of way and all reasonable assistance in running his race, who prevents friction and removes misunderstanding, who is sufficiently sympathetic and sufficiently informed as to the work of each to quicken with commendation where commendation will count most and to stand like a wall of adamant between an instructor and unjust criticism and attack from either inside or outside the seminary world, whose character and example and authority make him a terror to every man who is either idle or incompetent; and who possesses the three characteristics absolutely essential to successful leadership—wisdom, energy and tact.

To the students he is the father of the seminary family, one who has a broad outlook both within and without the institution, who has had experience and observation as to men and affairs and is therefore a wise counselor, who has forgotten neither his youth nor his blunders and therefore has the patience of a true friend, who is open and approachable and thoughtful and considerate—more willing to close his eyes occasionally than to be always making an “issue” yet with a constantly firm though light touch upon the reins—never for a moment permitting a personal whim to grow into a permanent tangential movement.

To the laity—for, brethren, the laity would really like to know personally the men who are directing the courses and who are responsible for the work and fortunes of our seminaries, and the laity are given to the belief that there might be possible advantage to the Deans themselves in contact with their brethren at large—to the laity he ought to be a man who breaks bread with them under their own roofs, who listens to their suggestions and studies their thought and their needs, who knowing their thought and their needs plans to meet both as far as in him lies, who reports to them face to face the work which is being accomplished either by the institution or by some student in whom they may have special interest, who devises ways of exciting the interest of the laity and drawing them from indifference to active cooperation, who actually feels himself in some way accountable even to the laity for a proper use of the power which has been entrusted to him, who knows his graduates and their success or failure and who is naturally and properly the wisest adviser of parishes which are endeavoring to fill vacant pulpits, and who can secure the confidence of the laity by the largeness and the value and the generosity of his service to any parish seeking his advice.

Fourth—Courses of study which are thorough yet flexible, comprehensive, inclusive, which cover the conditions and demands of the life of to-day, which are scientific in temper and in method.

The laity cannot and do not assume to even suggest what form the work in technical theology should take, how much time should be given to that which is exceedingly remote, how much mental and spiritual energy shall be expended upon that which seems at times rather mouldy. But that part of the laity which is at all informed in educational thought and present-day methods insists that topical schemes and the study of sources and the use of charts and all similar modern helps ought to have due consideration and recognition, and the laity in general believe that somewhere in the course of training demanded as preparatory to the priesthood there should be sound and persistent and sufficient instruction in these four subjects: (1) voice-building and use, to the point of distinct enunciation, proper emphasis and pleasing modulation: (2) the details of parish organization and administration, surely at least until the fact of marriage and the legitimacy of children are duly established by proper and accurate and authentic records, till such account is kept and rendered of the moneys passing through the rector's hands as will guard him against an intolerable confusion of his private and official finances, and until at least an outline of the history and work of the parish is preserved for posterity: (3) a careful study of the place and value and methods of the modern Sunday school: and (4) such knowledge of the sociological movement of the day as will throw some light upon the reasons for a multiplicity of parochial relations and undertakings, opportunities and duties, never dreamed of even a single generation ago.

Fifth—Practice-work or what may be called laboratory-work: now possible in every theological seminary not so remote from the world as to have the wisdom of its location called seriously in question. This should include every form of parish-work and organization, is the concrete or objective side of the work to which reference has already been made, and should stand to theological training precisely as the practice-classes of a well-regulated normal school stand to educational training.

After all this, what?—Or do you think that the demands of the laity already exceed that which is reasonable. Well, the laity are entirely willing to work with inexperienced graduates, but the laity do not believe that it is either wise or necessary or fitting that inexperienced graduates be put over them. Though an attorney may be admitted to the bar at an early age, he quite generally remains in comparative obscurity and under supervision until he is thirty. A physician rarely undertakes much independent or important work before he has reached that age, and if he did undertake it he would meet with scant encouragement. Not often does a teacher go to the head of a school at an earlier age. Most

business men and nearly all technical men serve a like apprenticeship. The Master himself was thirty before He began to teach and preach. Why should not those who aspire to become leaders of men in spiritual things be equally careful and conscientious and equally patient under apprenticeship in their preparation for this sacred trust. Years ago Mark Hopkins, then President of Williams College, told me that he most sincerely believed that as a rule the men who so early assume full charge of independent parishes do more harm than good before they reach thirty years of age. After life-long observation in our own communion, my revered father was firmly of like opinion. I have heard more than one Bishop assent to this. And I know that this sentiment is very general among the laity. Men and women who have given years to careful and conscientious preparation for their own life-work, including a long apprenticeship, smile incredulously if not scornfully when some youngster in both years and training is put over them in ecclesiastical and spiritual affairs. Men who have grown gray in the intelligent and generous service of the Church find it hard to accept such men as leaders, and equally hard to be compelled to be their ecclesiastical nurses until they are able to walk alone and can be trusted to go out after dark. Why should there not be then, after graduation from the Seminary, some years—five years if you please—of service under approved supervision, in city or town or village, before full charge of a parish is either asked or granted. If in the city, this may be as assistant in a parish or in its missions, or as a worker in some of the almost innumerable social or socio-charitable organizations, or in all of these combined. If in village or town, then under the charge and guidance of some nearby priest, or possibly under a wise extension of the powers of the Arch-deacons. In this way the Bishop would have ample opportunity to study the man, the laity would come into better knowledge of him, and above all and better than all the man would come into better knowledge of himself. Then the final call to what I venture to call the full priesthood would come as it surely came of old—from without as well as from within, possibly from without before from within: and the Church would have that greater assurance of successful service which follows upon a consensus of opinion carefully established upon sufficient observation.

But suppose this call to an independent position does not come? Well, there still remains what ought to be, or ought to be made to be, the large and useful and dignified position of an assistant. Surely, no man who rejects this is fit for the priesthood. It does not seem necessary to waste words over that proposition. There are thousands of men, the world over, happy and successful and ef-

ficient in subordinate positions—and why may not this be true of the clergy? But even if the failure is complete, there are still other thousands of men who find no place or welcome in the profession which they have chosen, and quietly and patiently turn aside to other fields.

This, then, brethren, is my thesis, all too inadequately presented and defended: that as an office and calling the priesthood stands very high in the opinion of the laity, that it calls for extraordinary qualities of mind and heart sustained by a sound body and made effective by peculiar personal experience and power, and that adequate preparation for this sacred vocation demands long and thorough which they have chosen, and quietly and patiently turn aside to other fields.

Date Due

10/10

10/10/10

~~NOV 10/10~~



Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01032 7411